

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4537

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SF

SUBJECT: LEON'S DECISION TO HEAD CRC PROMPTS'

LABOR PARTY RIFT

REF: CAPE TOWN 0350

1. LABOR PARTY (LP) LEADER SONNY LEON HAS ACCEPTED GOVERNMENT OFFERS TO BE CHAIRMAN OF COLORED REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (CRC) AND TO PROPOSE NAMES FOR NOMINATION TO APPOINTIVE CRC SEATS. LEON'S DECISIONS, WHICH APPROVED BY LP CAUCUS, HAVE NONETHELESS BEEN HEATEDLY OPPOSED BY SOME LABOR PARTY FIGURES, INCLUDING DEPUTY LEADER DAVID CURRY, AS A SELLOUT.

2. DECISION TO ACCEPT CRC CHAIRMANSHIP AND NOMINATE CANDIDATES APPARENTLY CONVEYED BY TELEGRAM FROM LEON TO MINISTER OF COLORED AFFAIRS VAN DER MERWE ON FRIDAY, APRIL 4. SAG'S OFFERS ARE PART OF CONCILIATORY STANCE ADOPTED BY GOVT SINCE OVERWHELMING LP LP VICTORY IN MARCH 19 CRC ELECTIONS. OTHER EVIDENCE OF SAG'S DESIRE TO PROJECT IMAGE OF "REASONABLENESS" IN AREA OF COLORED POLITICS WAS ITS APPROVAL OF MODIFICATION IN HOUSE OF

ASSEMBLY OF RECENTLY INTRODUCED BILL TO GIVE MINCOLORED AFFAIRS FULL POWERS OVER CRC IN CASE HE DETERMINES COUNCIL

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NOT CARRYING OUT ITS DUTIES (REFTEL). BILL NOW SPECIFIES

THAT SAG WILL NOT ASSUME COUNCIL'S LEGISLATIVE, BUT RATHER ONLY ADMINISTRATIVE, FUNCTIONS IF IT DEEMS NECESSARY. (OPPOSITION NOTED THAT AS GOVT HAS VETO POWER OVER CRC LEGISLATION ANYWAY, MODIFICATION OF BILL MEANINGLESS.) LEON'S ACCEPTANCE OF SAG'S OFFERS WOULD SEEM TO OBIVIATE NECESSITY OF IMPLEMENTING ACT.

3. THOUGH APPROVED BY LP CAUCUS, DECISIONS HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED BY SOME AS CONSTITUTING COMPLETE TURNABOUT OF PARTY'S CAMPAIGN PLATFORM TO BOYCOTT AND DESTROY CRC. LEADING FIGURES MAINTAINING PUBLIC SILENCE, BUT PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT LAST WEEK'S KIMBERLY MEETING OF LP CAUCUS WAS PUNCTUATED BY WALKOUT OF DEPUTY LEADER DAVID CURRY. CURRY'S OPPOSITION TO LEON'S STANCE APPARENTLY SUPPORTED BY REV. ALAN HENDRICKES, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, NORMAN MIDDLETON, NATAL PARTY LEADER, AND FRED PETERS, NATIONAL SECRETARY, AND HAS LED TO PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE SPLIT IN LP.

4. COMMENT: CAUCUS SCHEDULED TO MEET AGAIN ON APRIL 12, AND IT POSSIBLE THAT BREACHES, IF INDEED THEY DO EXIST, WILL BE HEALED. HOWEVER, IT CLEAR THAT LEON'S DECISION TO UTILIZE CRC AS PLATFORM TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT WILL COST HIM SOME SUPPORT IN COLORED POLITICAL CIRCLES.
EDMONDSON

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